

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1797

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AR, OAS
SUBJECT: IAHRC PROPOSED VISIT TO ARGENTINA

1. A PROPOSAL REPORTED HERE IN THE PRESS LAST MONTH OF THE
INTER AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION'S (IAHRC) INTENTION TO VISIT ARGENTINA HAS
GENERATED GREAT INTEREST AMONG HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVOCATES HERE, ALTHOUGH MOST ARE
SKEPTICAL THE GOA WILL ALLOW IAHRC ENTRY.
GOA, ITSELF, PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE REQUEST
OF THE IAHRC, BUT HAS HAD NO FURTHER
COMMENT EXCEPT THAT THE PROPOSAL IS UNDER
STUDY WITHIN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

2. ACTING HEAD OF FOREIGN OFFICE WORKING GROUP
ON HUMAN RIGHTS (FLORES) TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER
ON MARCH 8 THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAD PREPARED
A DETAILED STUDY OF THE IAHRC PROPOSAL WHICH
HAD BEEN FORWARDED RECENTLY TO THE PRESIDENCY
FOR ACTION. FLORES THOUGHT THAT THE DECISION
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WOULD ULTIMATELY BE MADE BY THE JUNTA ITSELF.

3. ACCORDING TO FLORES, THE FOREIGN OFFICE'S PAPER DID
NOT POSE A SIMPLE "YES OR NO QUESTION." RATHER, THE
PAPER FOCUSED ON THE CONDITIONS, GUIDELINES, AND TIMING
FOR A POSSIBLE VISIT. HE REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON THE OUTCOME,
INDICATING THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A CLOSE AND HARD

DECISION.

4. PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VICE PRESIDENT MIGNONE, WHO AS FORMER OAS EMPLOYEE HAS CLOSE TIES WITH IAHRC, HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT THE IAHRC PROPOSED INFORMALLY THAT A FIVE-PERSON DELEGATION VISIT ARGENTINA IN MAY. HE BELIEVES THAT TIMING OF THE PROPOSAL (AND OF THE VISIT) IS AN EFFORT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE GOA'S SPECIAL CONCERN REGARDING ITS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE PRIOR TO THE WORLD FOOTBALL CUP MATCHES HERE IN JUNE.

5. EMBASSY COMMENT: THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAS BEEN CONSIDERING A VISIT OF THE IAHRC FOR ANUMBER OF MONTHS. FONMIN UNDERSECRETARY ALLARA MADE A SPECIAL POINT TO INITIATE CONTACTS WITH THE IAHRC ON HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON LATE LAST YEAR. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY ARGENTINA'S INIATIVE TO INCLUDE A SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE IAHRC IN THE MONTES-VANCE JOINT COMMUNIQUE IN NOVEMBER 1977. IT COULD WELL BE THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE IS PROPOSING OPTIONS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THE SUCCWSSFUL GOA POLICY TO CONFRONT DIRECTLY, BUT ON THEIR TERMS, THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVES DIRECTED AGAINST THEM. WHETHER THE JUNTA (AND THEIR MILITARY ADVISORS) WOULD ACCEPT SUCH A HIGH RISK STRATEGY IS A MAJOR QUESTION. HOWEVER, IF THE GAMBIT IS ACCEPTED THE CONFIDENTIAL

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IAHRC WILL BE FACED WITH A DIFFICULT NEGOTIATION IN WHICH THE FIRST ENTRY OF THE IAHRC IN THE SOUTHERN CONE COULD POSSIBLY BE AN OBJECTIVE TO BE TRADED FOR THE COMMITTEE'S ACCEPTANCE OF RESTRICTIVE GUIDELINES. CHAPLIN

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